

CONGRESSMAN JARED POLIS

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ACHIEVING CHANGE IN EDUCATION (ACE) ACT OF 2011

Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools

America's children must never be trapped in schools that fail to prepare them to compete and win in the global economy. The Achieving Change in Education (ACE) Act would create momentous change at persistently low-performing public schools by supporting evidence-based turnaround models that improve student performance.

Turning Around Schools. The ACE Act would provide School Improvement Grants for districts that choose and implement—with family and community input—one of six intervention models at a chronically low-performing school:

Transformation Model: Replace the principal in some circumstances, strengthen staffing, apply a research-based instructional program, provide extended learning time, and implement a new governance and flexibility in program, staffing, budgeting and scheduling decisions.

Turnaround Model: Replace the principal in some circumstances, rehire no more than 50 percent of staff, apply a research-based instructional program, provide extended learning time, and implement a new governance structure.

Restart Model: Convert or close a school and reopen it under the management of an effective and high-quality charter operator, charter management, or education management organization.

School Closure Model. Close the school and enroll the students in higher-performing public schools within the district.

School Engagement Model. Replace the principal in some circumstances, lengthen the school year, and implement an early warning indicator dropout prevention and recovery system focused on attendance, behavior and course credit, along with flexibility in program, staffing, budgeting and scheduling decisions.

Expanded School Choice Model. Close the school and transfer students, along with the School Improvement Grants, to one or more existing, high-performing traditional school in the same or another school district, under a mutual agreement, or to a high-performing charter school.

Under any of the bill's models, turnaround schools may retain principals if they have been at the school for less than two years; or less than three years and have led a turnaround plan in that school.

The bill would authorize \$600 million in FY 2012 (and such sums as necessary in the next four years) for states that apply.

Rewarding Achievement. The ACE Act would reward schools that are making significant progress in: increasing student achievement and growth; closing their achievement gaps; and, increasing high school graduation rates, if a high school. Funds could be used to financially reward principals, teachers and other staff, to improve or enrich the school or district's program, and to increase flexibility in budgeting and staffing decisions.

The bill would authorize \$300 million in FY 2012 (such sums as necessary in the next four years) for states that apply.